

Voth, Texas  
April 6, 1944

Mr. C. W. Stevens  
70 Diamond Block Coal Co.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
Dear Mr. Stevens:

In regards to the letter you wrote me of March 27, I am the mother of Ralph S. Masterman, who was killed in the bomber crash of July 5 on San Miguel Island off Santa Barbara.

On March 21 I received a telegram from the base commander at Santa Maria stating that they had found the body of my son. Ten days later they sent me another telegram saying that before they could ship my son's remains they had to be sure of positive identification. On Sunday April 3 I received his remains and on April 4 I held the funeral and buried them.

I don't know what information you have regarding the death of your son, but I shall be glad to pass on to you what Sargeant Valentine, who accompanied my son's remains home, told us. He said that on the morning of July 6<sup>th</sup> there was a low ceiling and the boys were evidently on their way in to their home field - flying by instruments alone. - Evidently they saw a clearing in the low ceiling and went into a glide going probably 200 or 400 miles an hour and crashed into one of the rocky mountain sides on San Miguel Island. The Air Corps, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard continued the search, even though they wired me last summer they were abandoning search. The Coast Guard went on San Miguel Island on foot & found the crashed bomber with the 12 bodies. I have another son in service who was in San Diego at the time awaiting



sailing orders in the Navy, who talked to the base commander and found that they thought the bomber had crashed into Pacific. According to the last telegram I received last summer I thought they had crashed into the Pacific too.

I hope this information will be a consolation to you as it is to me, because I feel that the end came quickly. The bomber did not burn only crashed and was completely demolished. They were 130 miles from their own field. They were 80 miles down the coast & 50 miles out to sea. San Miguel Island is about 50 miles from the coast and about 90 miles long which explains why they were so long in finding the wreckage. Sergeant Valentine seemed to think the wreckage was found in the early days of February.

The Pennsylvania Shipyard & Beaumont,

Levas has dedicated a ship to my son's memory. I am very proud; this honor for him. I live 12 miles from Beaumont on a poultry farm and hatchery.

I am sending you a picture of my son and I wish, if you have a picture of your son, Flight Officer, Vernon C. Stevens, you would send me one. Also, if you have any addresses, any of the other boy's parents that you would send them to me, so that I might write to them.

Thanking you for your kindness in writing and in advance for the picture and addresses I am

Yours truly  
Mrs. R. S. Mastersan

I am sending picture under different cover.

Mrs. R. S. Mastersan